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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RICE MEETS UNFPA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THORAYA OBAID

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In a June 22 meeting, UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid thanked Ambassador Rice for the U.S.'s renewed engagement with and financial contribution to UNFPA. Obaid said that UNFPA was steadily making progress in China, and that the China's Minister of Population and Family Planning Commission Li Bin had asked Obaid to approach the U.S. about starting a dialogue on ICPD implementation and the UNFPA program in China. Obaid informed Ambassador Rice of the census work that UNFPA conducts in many difficult environments, including Palestine, Southern Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan and North Korea. On pursuing areas for future collaboration, Ambassador Rice noted that the U.S. first had some catching up to do after the recent period of disengagement. End Summary

¶2. (SBU) During a June 22 courtesy call, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director Thoraya Obaid thanked the U.S. for its renewed engagement and voluntary contribution of \$46 million to UNFPA. Obaid said that she and others at UNFPA were "very happy" about renewed U.S. support for UNFPA, and she asked Ambassador Rice to pass along her sentiments of gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Clinton. Obaid was particularly pleased that, at the last two UNFPA Executive Board meetings and at this year's Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the U.S. delegation was once again active and engaged. The U.S. had been instrumental in achieving the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Cairo Program of Action, and the lack of U.S. involvement in the last few years had been disappointing.

UNFPA Activities in China

¶3. (SBU) Obaid stated that UNFPA's work in China had caused considerable difficulties for UNFPA's relationship with the U.S. Government. She noted that in 2010 UNDP would establish a new program for China, and that it would focus less on resource delivery and more on policy support and advocacy. According to Obaid, UNFPA was already productively engaging with Chinese officials on issues such as aging, youth and reproductive health, sex selection, birth quotas, and second child taxes. A donor consultation process for the new program would take place in Beijing sometime next year, and Obaid hoped the U.S. Embassy in Beijing would actively participate.

¶4. (SBU) She described China's leadership as generally receptive to UNFPA and ostensibly amenable to change. Obaid noted that UNFPA had had considerable success in engaging China on the issue of sex selection by pointing out how the practice was leading to a lopsided population. Consequently,

the Chinese Government, in cooperation with UNFPA, had initiated a campaign to honor girls. Obaid added that, while Chinese officials will never come out publicly and say they will stop bad practices such as birth quotas and second child taxes, they are stopping these practices quietly, especially in the 30 counties where UNFPA is active.

¶ 15. (SBU) At this year's ICPD meetings, which coincided with the 15th anniversary of the Cairo Plan of Action, China's Minister of Population and Family Planning Commission Li Bin discussed the progress China was making. Obaid said that Li asked her on the margins of the meeting to encourage the U.S. to engage with Li on issues such as China's ICPD implementation and the new UNFPA program in 2010. Ambassador Rice remarked that Li's comments were interesting, and the Mission would follow-up with its CPD counterpart in the Chinese Mission.

UNFPA Census Work

¶ 16. (SBU) Obaid informed Ambassador Rice of UNFPA's census work in difficult locations such as Palestine, Iraq, Southern Sudan, Afghanistan and North Korea. Countries typically invite UNFPA to conduct the census; UNFPA then organizes a roundtable of donors to support the project. In order for UNFPA to certify a census, the recipient government must agree to follow a variety of UNFPA rules, including those pertaining to access of census enumerators. An independent board, which includes a representative from the U.S. Census Bureau, is responsible for making certifications. Obaid noted that the controversial Southern Sudan census had been

certified in this manner.

¶ 17. (SBU) Obaid said that UNFPA's census program in North Korea (DPRK) was partially funded by South Korea and is in the early stages. In inviting UNFPA to conduct the census, the DPRK had to agree to follow UNFPA rules and international standards. As is custom, the DPRK will be allowed to review the results of the census prior to its release. UNFPA's census work in Afghanistan has been stalled by very real security concerns; to date, ten Afghani UNFPA census enumerators have been killed in the line of duty. Lastly, Obaid mentioned that USAID had recently agreed to work with UNFPA on a census in Chad.

U.S./UNFPA Collaboration

¶ 18. (SBU) Ambassador Rice informed Obaid that the first \$30 million tranche of the U.S. contribution to UNFPA would arrive in a few weeks, and a second tranche of roughly \$16 million would arrive in late summer or early fall. Obaid asked Ambassador Rice's advice as to how to further strengthen the U.S./UNFPA relationship. She invited Ambassador Rice to be the first Member State speaker at an upcoming UNFPA Executive Board meeting, and to deliver remarks at an ICPD Cairo plus 15 exhibition of photos from Congo on October 12 that will be hosted by the Secretary General, the BBC and UNPFA. Ambassador Rice welcomed the invitations. She noted that the U.S. would need some time to "catch up" after the recent period of disengagement, and that USAID was still without an Administrator.

RICE